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'SUBVERSION' DISCUSSION PAPER.

THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER

Ten Days That Didn't Overthrow Capitalism

"No-one can belittle the huge importance of the October revolution and its influence on the course of world history and the progress of mankind",

announced the chairman of the Soviet parliament in November 1990. Nevertheless, we're going to try.

The article which follows this introduction views the Russian revolution of October 1917 from the viewpoint of the inhabitants of Kronstadt, a strategic island in the Gulf of Finland, which was universally regarded as the most radical part of Russia, until it was militarily suppressed by the Bolshevik government in March 1921.

This introduction measures theories of what happened in 1917 against the events of February to October, to see what relevance, if any, these events and theories have for the communist project today.

The view that the Soviet system, resulting from the tactical genius of Lenin and the discipline of his party, is a great gain for humanity to be defended by the working class, has been somewhat eroded by that system's collapse. So too has the orthodox Trotskyist variant of this position.

Analyses which endorse October, but say that at some point between then and now, Russia became capitalist, have more life in them. Immediately after the second world war, various tendencies, for example Tony Cliff's, tried to make sense of the Red Army's rule in Eastern Europe. They worked out that wage labour prevailed in these countries, and concluded that they were dominated by a form of capitalism, which they called "state capitalism". The problem was **when** the gains of October had been lost.

This is not an academic question. Though we try to avoid the habit of seeing today in terms of 1917, there are some lessons to be drawn from then which still apply. We are **still** engaged in battles against the manoeuvres of Leninists in the class struggle in the 1990's. For this reason alone, this obituary is worthwhile. On the other hand, the funeral is long overdue. The conclusions of the following contributions are necessarily general, and many of them are non-specific to the Russian revolution.

The most dangerous of all errors made by non-Leninist tendencies analysing the Russian revolution is the critique of Leninism as undemocratic. Councilists and other democrats turn the ideology of Leninism on its head. Instead of a benevolent genius leading a clear minority through numerous dire straits to ultimate victory, councilists saw an evil genius, with an undemocratic minority party, which seized power without the approval of the majority of the working class, and thus was bound to do no good. The conclusion they draw is that only when the majority of the working class (usually in one country) have voted for the revolution is it safe for it to take place. This idea has been defended by councilists since the early twenties, and still finds an echo in the revolutionary movement of today. Democracy can only hinder the revolutionary minority. Depending on majority approval, whether in one workplace, one city, or one country, will always prevent this minority doing what needs to be done. As we argue throughout these text, what went wrong in Russia was **not** the result of a minority substituting itself for the working class.

MAJORITY RUHLES

The council communist movement arose in the 1920's in response to the Bolshevik counter-revolution and the manoeuvres of the German Communist Party (KPD). The Communist Workers Party (KAPD) had emerged from a split in the KPD, on the basis of opposition to parliament and trade unionism. The council communists, most of whom came from the KAPD and its Dutch equivalent, went further than the KAPD in their critique of the Bolsheviks. Whereas the KAPD argued that the Soviet state, the official communist parties around the world, grouped together in the Communist International, became counter-revolutionary in 1921-22, the council communists discovered that they had never been revolutionary at all.

They defended a simplified Marxist "stages" theory of history, taking at face value the claim that there had been a series of "bourgeois revolutions" which overthrew the old feudal social relations and substituted capitalist ones. These revolutions included the English in the 1640s, the French in 1789, and the German in 1848. The capitalist outcome of these revolutions was inevitable, notwithstanding the involvement of the proletariat. The clearest defence of this position can be found in *From the Bourgeois to the Proletarian Revolution* by Otto Ruhle [1]. For our critique of the concept of bourgeois revolutions, see the article in *Wildcat* 13 [2].

The councilists argued that Russia could not give birth to a

proletarian revolution because it was too backward. This argument is the same as that put forward by most of the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks prior to 1917. Capitalism in Russia, precisely because it had taken root late, was **more** advanced than that of England. Petrograd had the biggest factory in the world. The fact that the territories of the Russian Empire were full of peasants could not make a workers' and soldiers' uprising in Petrograd capitalist "in essence".

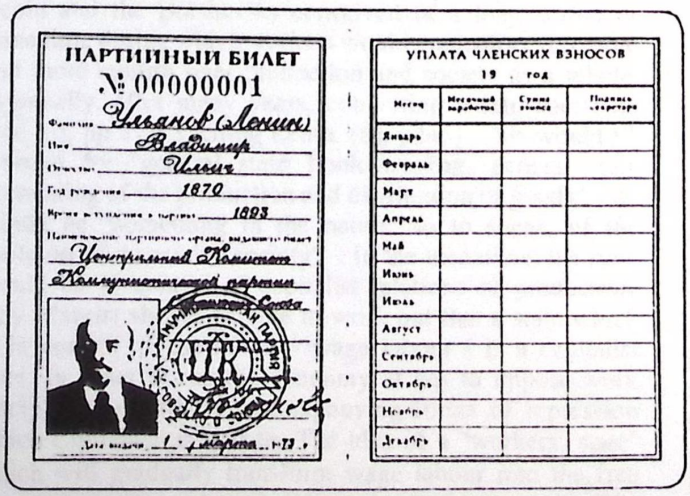
Even if Russian capitalism had been backward, this is beside the point. Petrograd was a link in a chain of industrial cities which stretched around the world, and its workers knew it. That is why they responded to Lenin's calls for an internationalist revolution.

Councilists were if anything more dogmatic and didactic in their interpretation of Marxism than their Leninist opponents:

"According to the phaseological pattern of development as formulated and advocated by Marx, after feudal tsarism in Russia there had to come the capitalist bourgeois state, whose creator and representative is the bourgeois class." ([1], p13).

But the tsars of Russia were capitalist from Peter the Great (1689-1725) onwards. Their religious beliefs did not make them feudal. The tsars, with the aid of foreign capital, had developed Russian capitalism, in particular in the shipping and related industries, creating a modern industrial base in Petrograd and Moscow. "Unlike in Western Europe, the State did not merely supervise the new industries; it directly managed the bulk of heavy industry, and part of light industry, thereby employing the majority of all industrial workers as forced labour" ([3], p3). "State capitalism" was not introduced by the Bolsheviks.

We therefore reject the councilist analysis of the origins, course and outcome of the Russian revolution. However, they do have the merit of being the first to point out the evidence for the capitalist nature of the Bolshevik regime and the social relations it supervised. In 1920, Otto Ruhle refused to take his place in the Communist International in Moscow, as the KAPD had instructed. His journey through Russia had completely disillusioned him with the idea that socialism was being built there. Ruhle attacks the Bolsheviks' national liberation policy, their giving the right of self-determination to the nations (in other words, to the bourgeoisie) of Finland, Poland, etc. as "the outcome of bourgeois political orientation" ([1], p14). He ridicules their giving land to the peasantry, though what the Bolsheviks should have done instead, he does not say. He attacks the treaty of Brest-Litovsk which brought peace between the Soviet state and German imperialism, giving the latter one last chance to step up the fight against both the Entente powers and its own working class. Ruhle points out that "nationalisation is not socialisation" and describes the Russian economy as "large-scale tightly centrally-run state capitalism... Only it is still capitalism". He equates the massacre of the Kronstadt uprising of 1921 with the suppression of the Paris Commune and the German revolution.



Lenin's Party card

The "left communist" current, in common with Cliff and other ex-Trotskyists, supports the Bolsheviks in the October revolution, but argues that the revolution degenerated because of Russia's isolation. This point of view deserves to be seriously considered, before being dismissed out of hand. The problem of **when** Russia was no longer a workers' state has caused tremendous problems to these groups, and most of them have given up trying to answer the question.

But they are generally in agreement on the primary cause of the degeneration: isolation. It is true that, if it were not supported by a revolution in the rest of the world, the Russian revolution would inevitably have led to capitalism. However, this is not why it did so. The Bolshevik regime did not try to create communism, find itself isolated, and end up implementing capitalist policies in spite of its best intentions. On the contrary, it enthusiastically administered and expanded capitalism - the exploitation of labour by means of the wages system - from its very first day in office.

"And the facts speak for themselves: after the October revolution Lenin did not want the expropriation of the capitalists, but only 'workers control'; control by the workers' shopfloor organizations over the capitalists, who were to continue to retain management of the enterprises. A fierce class struggle ensued, invalidating Lenin's thesis on the collaboration of the classes under his power: the capitalists replied with sabotage and the workers' collectives took over all the factories one after the other... And it was only when the expropriation of the capitalists had been effected **de facto** by the worker masses that the Soviet government recognized it **de jure** by publishing the decree on the nationalization of industry. Then, in 1918, Lenin answered the socialist aspirations of the workers by opposing to them the system of State capitalism ('on the model of wartime Germany'), with the greatest participation of former capitalists in the new Soviet economy." (A. Ciliga, *The Russian Enigma* [12], pp 283-284).

The Bolsheviks were already imprisoning their revolutionary

opponents before the outbreak of the civil war in 1918. They had already tried to strike deals to keep the capitalist managers in charge of the factories. As Mandel shows in *The Petrograd Workers and the Soviet Seizure of Power* [5], the factory committees frequently came into conflict with the Bolsheviks, who wanted to dissolve them into the trade unions. He also quotes the leather manufacturers' organisation in Petrograd to the effect that the Bolshevik trade unionists were preferable, as people with whom jointly to manage production, to the "anarcho-communist" factory committees. Clearly, to some extent, the factory committees attempted to continue the revolution after October in the teeth of Bolshevik opposition. We do not however idolise the factory committees, as does Brinton in *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control* [6]. Though containing useful information, it should be read in conjunction with *Factory Committees and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* [7], in which Goodey shows how simplistic it is to see the committees as the goodies and the Bolsheviks as the baddies.

Relations of production inside Russia never ceased to be capitalist. Hardly **any** attempt was made to abolish wage labour and the law of value, and **none** by the Party. The Bolsheviks did carry out nationalisations, under pressure from the factory committees, but these had nothing to do with communism.

In *"Left-Wing"* Communism [9] written two and a half years after the October uprising, Lenin argued that in Russia the trade unions were "and will long remain" a necessary means for "gradually transferring the management of the whole economy of the country to the hands of the working **class** (and not of the separate trades), and later to the hands of all the toilers". Lenin didn't claim that at that time the working class even managed the economy. They had not even instituted workers management, let alone socialism. He argued that state capitalism was a step on the road to socialism, and urged Russian socialists to "study the state capitalism of the Germans, to adopt it **with all possible strength**, not to spare **dictatorial** methods in order to hasten its adoption" (*On "Left" Infantilism and the Petty-Bourgeois Spirit*, cited in E.H. Carr, [10], p99).

Lenin and the Bolsheviks conceived of a long period of transition, during which workers would gradually exert more and more control over production and society as a whole, eventually, after many years, converting it into socialism (see [6], pp 12-13, citing Lenin, [8], p245). This would be assisted by "general state **book-keeping**, general state accounting of the production and distribution of goods", and would be "something in the nature, so to speak, of the **skeleton** of a socialist society". . In the meantime, the state would be in control of capitalist relations of production. Any Marxist should be able to work out that a state which is in control of capitalism - wage labour - is a capitalist state. In order to run the economy, it has to impose work discipline, and all the accompanying forms of repression which capitalism is heir to. The idea of a "workers' state" which will gradually transform wage labour into the free association of producers is an un-Marxist utopia. The involvement of the working class in the administration of capitalism, through Soviets, etc., just leads it into managing

its own exploitation.

Supporters of the notion of a "workers' state" will admit that, initially, such a state is in charge of a capitalist economy. What will prevent it becoming a capitalist state is the **intentions** of the people running it. They - organised in the Party - **want** to create communism. But it is again basic materialism to point out that states develop independently of the intentions of their functionaries. A state in charge of capitalism cannot transform it into communism by willpower. There has to be another way.

The concept of a "degenerated" workers' state is absurd. States are administrative bodies based on armed forces. They defend particular social relations. A state cannot degenerate. It cannot gradually change from defending the proletariat to defending the bourgeoisie. This would involve a period of transition in which it abolished wage labour with less and less enthusiasm, followed by a phase in which it defended it with greater and greater vigour, divided by an interregnum in which it couldn't quite make up its mind!

To summarily demonstrate the nature of the Bolshevik regime, we will briefly look at three areas of society in which the new regime strengthened capitalism with a resolve which must have been the envy of the liberals they had just overthrown.

The Extraordinary Commission to Fight Counter-Revolution, or Cheka, was founded on December 8 1917 "to watch the press, saboteurs, **strikers**, and the Socialist-Revolutionaries of the Right" (Daniels, [18] p90, citing the Cheka's founding decree, our emphasis). Strikers were now labelled agents of the counter-revolution, and subject to rapidly increasing repression, starting with "confiscation, confinement, deprivation of (food) cards", and ending with summary execution.

In March 1918, Trotsky abolished the elective principle in the army, replacing elected officers with former tsarist officers who, "in the area of command, operations and fighting" (in other words, everything), were given "full

responsibility" and "the necessary rights" ([18], p93). One year after the revolution which destroyed the tsar's army and navy, Trotsky restored them.

Finally, in the economy, Lenin said in April 1918: "We must raise the question of piecework and apply and test it in practice; we must raise the question of applying much of what is scientific and progressive in the Taylor system, we must make wages correspond to the total amount of goods turned out..." ([18], p96).

And he didn't just raise these questions, he answered them.

When a particular state imprisons strikers, decimates soldiers, militarises labour, cooperates with factory owners and negotiates territory with imperialist powers, its nature is clear. Such a state defends the capitalist class and the capitalist mode of production against the proletariat and the communist movement. Such was the nature of the Soviet state created by the October revolution.

WE GOT THE POWER

Between February and October 1917, the working class had a significant amount of power in Russia. Following the Petrograd mutiny of 27 February, when troops refused to shoot demonstrators and striking workers and joined them, the whole edifice of tsarist autocracy collapsed. Kerensky commented that throughout the whole of the Russian lands, there was "literally not one policeman". They crowded into the jails to avoid lynching, taking the place of thousands of hardened revolutionaries of all factions who wasted no time in getting stuck in. From February to October, a situation of "dual power" existed, with a weak bourgeois government and numerous organs of working class power. Even at the lowest points during these eight months, when the bourgeoisie was on the offensive, workers defied the bosses, and soldiers and sailors chose which orders to obey. The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, led by the Petrograd Soviet, had more power than the Provisional Government, though they persistently refused to use it to destroy the latter, in fact they propped it up by sending ministers and giving it "socialist" credibility.

Finally on October 25, the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Bolshevik-dominated Petrograd Soviet smashed the Provisional Government and announced that the Soviets were now the power in the land. The Congress of Soviets elected a government, the Council of People's Commissars, or SovNarKom, to which the Soviets now gave increasing amounts of their own power. From the viewpoint of the working class, it is difficult to find any major gains resulting from October. There is one major exception: peace.

It is understandable that the Soviets, after much debate, accepted Lenin's arguments for signing a peace treaty with Germany. Most of the Soviets initially bitterly opposed the idea, arguing that a revolutionary war, even a guerilla war which would not actually beat Germany, would hasten the advent of the world revolution. But the argument that Russia was exhausted won the day. The Brest-Litovsk treaty was disastrous for the working class. It freed German militarism from fighting a war on two fronts, giving it the Ukraine, and boosted its morale (its power over its own workers), which enabled it to launch the March-July 1918 offensives on the Western front, prolonging the war.

It is impossible for us to say exactly what effect a refusal by the working class to accept Brest-Litovsk would have had. Certainly the Germans would have advanced towards Petrograd, but a communist guerilla war would have tied up vast numbers of troops, bringing forward the collapse of the Central Powers and the wave of Revolutions which eventually brought them down in November 1918. There was certainly a readiness for a fight, as shown by the debates in the Soviets, and by subsequent events in the Ukraine, where a large anarchist army fought the counter-revolution with considerable success, until it was suppressed by the Red Army (see Voline, *The Unknown Revolution*, [11]).

The Russian revolution was **not** defeated primarily because Russia was isolated by the civil war and the defeat of the German revolution - it had already been seriously undermined from within before isolation had a chance to take hold. Of course, the invasion of White Russian and imperialist armies in the summer of 1918 took its toll of surviving revolutionary gains, not least because it enabled the Bolshevik government to impose capitalist discipline and the militarisation of labour. But the Soviet government was **already** defending capital against communism before the outbreak of the civil war. So "isolation" is a feeble excuse. The suppression of Kronstadt in 1921, the most spectacular act of the Bolshevik counter-revolution, was the culmination of four years of constant attacks on the working class revolution of February 1917. Lenin succeeded where Kerensky had failed.

Nor were the Bolsheviks forced to conduct the civil war in the way they did by circumstances beyond their control. Insurgents in the Ukraine were capable of holding Soviet congresses to organise the struggle against the White armies. The Red Army under Trotsky ruthlessly liquidated such attempts to conduct a communist civil war against counter-revolution. Voline cites Trotsky's order no. 1824 of June 4, 1919, which calls participation in a Soviet Congress of insurgents in various regions of the Ukraine, "an act of high treason", and forbids it: "In no case shall it take place" ([11], pp596-597). Whilst the "anarchist bandits" were fighting Denikin's offensive, the Red Army attacked them from the rear.

One of the causes of the 1921 uprising was the capitalist organisation of the Red Army. This was not a consequence of the civil war, preceding it by four months. The arbitrary brutality of bourgeois military discipline is neither necessary nor possible in a class struggle army. We only have to look at Makhno's partisans to see this (see Arshinov, [13]). Another was corruption. The armed guards who checked people bringing in food from the countryside took bribes to allow black marketeers through, and took what they wanted for resale or for themselves.

It is quite clear from Trotsky's account [14] that the Bolshevik Party consistently tried to hold back the class

struggle up to October 1917 until they were in a position to dominate the government which resulted from the insurrection. Had Kornilov taken Petrograd in August 1917, he would have murdered the left-wing leaders, yet when sailors from the *Aurora* visited Trotsky in prison, he urged restraint! ([14], **2**, p233).

THE FIREHOSE

Some of the writings and speeches of Bolshevik leaders at this time are impressive. Lenin's *April Theses* [15] served to radicalise the Bolshevik apparatus in 1917. The depth of this radicalisation can be gauged by the introduction of one-man management a year later. *The State and Revolution* [16], Lenin's most revolutionary work, was not published until 1918, when the counter-revolution was well under way, thus made no positive contribution. The Bolsheviks talked of a "commune-state", of "the arming of the whole people", of the "abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy", and proceeded to create a capitalist police state which disarmed the working class and gave birth to the biggest bureaucracy the world has ever seen. The more radical elements of Bolshevik propaganda had the effect of disguising a social democratic party as a communist one.

Lenin, Mrs. Lenin, and their cat, Iron Felix

The Bolsheviks were, of all the Russian underground groups, the most opposed to the formation of Soviets in 1905. In February 1917,

"Inside Russia, the most active group in St. Petersburg, the Bolsheviks, refused requests for arms from the strikers and tried to dissuade them from further demonstrations, convinced that the tide was on the ebb and that consolidation was needed." ([17], p39).

In August, "The Bolshevik leaders themselves often joked about the similarity of their warnings to the political *leit-motif* of the German social democracy, which has invariably restrained the masses from every serious struggle by referring to the danger of provocateurs and necessity of accumulating strength." ([14], **2**, p311).

A generally held view of revolution is that timing is of the essence. The prospective revolutionary class or party must choose its moment well. Too early an insurrectionary attempt will provoke repression; too late, and the revolutionaries will have missed their chance.

A proletarian revolution is only possible when the ruling class is in severe crisis, which is likely to last for months. Such was the case in Russia in 1917. In such situations, it is unlikely that the proletariat will lose much by going on the offensive. Even in the normal day-to-day life of capitalist society, it is unusual, though not unheard-of, for a genuine revolutionary group (as opposed to a leftist one) to urge restraint.

Military analogies are over-used in the class war, and often misleading. The class war is fundamentally different from a war between states. The workers are not an army until they start fighting. But in straightforward physical confrontations between classes, an understanding of timing, the balance of forces, and so on, is important. We cannot condemn the Bolsheviks simply because they held back the armed struggle. However, revolutionaries would not spend most of their time trying to hold back the class where the government is weak and the working class has real autonomous power in sections of society, including the armed forces. They would not try to prevent strikes as the Bolsheviks in the Vyborg district did ([14], **2**, p10).

The Bolsheviks' strategy of holding back the class war was not based on fear of provoking the government (what would the government have done when provoked that it couldn't have done in any case?), but on the argument that there was no coherent force to take power. They left the Provisional Government in power while they were unsure of their ability to provide an alternative administration. The government could not even control the naval fort which defended Petrograd. So when Lenin urged "caution, caution, caution", he was trying to hold back the class struggle until the Bolsheviks were in a position to use it for their own ends. To do this, he needed a more disciplined party, so he described Bolsheviks who had supported the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government" against the more moderate official Bolshevik slogan "Long Live the Soviet" as guilty of "a serious crime". "Long Live the Soviet" in July 1917 meant supporting the body which, as Lenin constantly pointed out, was the main prop of the capitalist government.

In Petrograd, even at the militant Putilov factory, the Bolsheviks tried to stop the July demo, but were swept aside by the workers. The party in the Vyborg district decided it had to go along to "maintain order" ([14], **2**, p17). Although Lenin did everything he could to prevent the July 4th armed demonstration, he explained why he had to support it once it was inevitable: "For our party to have broken with the spontaneous movement of the Kronstadt masses would have struck an irreparable blow at its authority".

Describing the genesis of the July Days, Trotsky admits: "With an embarrassed shake of the head, the Vyborg Bolsheviks would complain to their friends: 'We have to play the part of the fire hose.'" ([14], **2**, p10). He candidly

describes now he persuaded the 176th regiment to defend the "socialist" ministers against the demonstrators. When the demonstrators demanded to see minister Tseretelli, leading Bolshevik Zinoviev came out and spoke: "I appealed to that audience to disperse peacefully at once, keeping perfect order, and under no circumstances permitting anyone to provoke them to any aggressive action." Trotsky adds: "This episode offers the best possible illustration of the keen discontent of the masses, their lack of any plan of attack, and the actual role of the Bolshevik party in the July events" ([14], 2, p45). It certainly does.

LOYAL OPPOSITIONS

Our critique of October is not that it was an undemocratic coup d'etat. Firstly, because we do not believe that a majority of the working class has to endorse an assault on state power by a minority, and secondly, because the Bolsheviks did have the support of a large proportion of the most militant workers. We would not quibble over the description of the result of October as a "workers' state", since it was based on the Soviets. But this is no guarantee that it will defend the interests of the working class.

Neither do we argue that the party was internally undemocratic. The *Kommunist* faction (see [19]), composed of some of the leading Bolsheviks in Moscow, argued against the party's decisions, saying that they "Instead of raising the banner forward to communism, raise the banner back to capitalism." The left communists also opposed the Brest-Litovsk treaty. When the civil war started, the left described the situation inside Russia as "War Communism". Housing was redistributed (see [20]), rail and post were free, electricity and water free when available, rent was abolished, and so, it appeared, was money. But in practice, most of the food was obtained on the black market, otherwise even more people would have died of starvation ([20], p101). Cannibalism also helped supplement Russia's meagre diet. Money was abolished only in the sense that inflation devalued it to such an extent it was replaced with barter.

Kollontai's Workers' Opposition advocated workers' control of capitalism, via the trade unions. Nowhere in *The Workers' Opposition* [21] does Kollontai understand that Russia is capitalist. The Workers' Opposition were "the first" to volunteer for the supression of Kronstadt in 1921 at the 10th Party Congress. At this congress, the left communists lurched to the right, defending private trade. After this, factions were banned, sent to Siberia, or shot. There were nevertheless numerous oppositions formally inside the Party even after this point, some of them quite positive, for example Miasnikov's Workers' Group and Bogdanov's Workers' Truth Group:

"The soviet, party, and trade-union bureaucracies and organizers find themselves with material conditions which are sharply distinguished from the conditions of existence of the working class. Their very well-being and the stability of their general position depend on the degree to which the toiling masses are exploited and subordinated to them." (*Appeal of the Workers' Truth Group*, 1922, cited in [18], p147).

Other examples can be found in Daniels, [22], and Ciliga, [12]. The latter describes the debates among oppositionists in prison and in exile in the late twenties and early thirties, many of whom had managed to work out what had gone wrong. But by this time it was too late.

FOR ANTI-STATE COMMUNISM

It is obvious that conditions today are far removed from 1917, so we would not mechanically transfer the lessons of the proletariat's mistakes in Russia to today. However, there are some general points which can be drawn from the Russian experience. Between February and October, the proletariat had considerable power in Russia, but then rapidly lost it, and a strong capitalist state was created. When class warfare reaches a certain level, a Soviet state may emerge. However it will only be a step on the road to communism if the revolutionary workers refuse to accept the Soviet state as their own, and oppose it as intransigently as they did its predecessor.

There is no substitute for the immediate task of socialising the entire economy, abolishing money, destroying all bureaucratic hangovers of capitalist rule, and rapidly internationalising the revolution. Any organisation which tries to hold back these measures should be swept aside.

There are no forms which guarantee the success of the revolution, neither is there much point in trying to avoid particular forms, nor making rules about which pre-ordained tasks each type of organisation must take on or refuse. With obvious qualifications, Herman Gorter's 1920 formulation against formalism still stands: "...during the revolution, every Trade Union, every workers' union even, is a political party - either pro or counter revolutionary" (Gorter, [23]).

No one organisation, whether formally political or ostensibly economic, will hold a monopoly of correct positions. The "revolutionary party" is the sum of all individuals and organisations, whether formal political organisations or not, which actually defend the needs of the social revolution at a given moment. It is impossible to centralise such a minority under one command. However, immense discipline and more importantly, solidarity, will be required for such a party to act in a unified way against the bourgeoisie and its well-organised political forces, let alone its military ones.

This minority can certainly take any action - for example, the overthrow of the state - which serves proletarian goals, without endorsement from the majority of the working class. It cannot however impose communism - this can only be the product of mass activity - therefore it does not seek to create a new state power - a "workers' state" - in place of the old administration. It remains continuously in opposition to any state which is set up, participating in organising the class war until its final victory in the destruction of all states, and the creation of world communism, a free association of producers, in which the freedom of each is the condition for the freedom of all.

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